

Grant Regulations

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State of California Department parks and Recreation
OHMVR Division
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Ref. Notice of proposed rulemaking:

Dear Sixto,

I want to thank you and your team for all the work you have been doing over the years to get this process to be fair, but at same time I feel there should be a reward for those who put “boots on the ground” rather than subsidize existing staff. I have been struggling with how to make my input on the changes of these grant regulations.

Here lies my dilemma: We, at Friends of Jawbone, El Mirage, and CTUC do not have any staff that needs to be subsidized. We either get grants or not. It’s simple for us, if we get no grant, there is no staff.

We, as a nonprofit, use 100 % of the grant on the ground operation and support, and in turn it is an economic benefit to the communities from which we operate. Why? Without the grant, there would be no employment and the support it takes to run operations on the ground.

As I see the entire grant process for federal, state and county agencies. They would have their employees with or without the grant, what benefit they get is that they can now subsidize their hierarchy of staff with OHV funds, and there is little relationship to money given on what really goes on the ground.

The disparity is as you and your team well know. When you visit us, you can count the workers going out in the field day in and day out. (Try to do that in other areas that get the same amount of money as we do and see the difference.)

Another difference is the wages. It probably costs 2 to 3 times more to pay a government employee to do the job vs. a nonprofit like us, who pay well, but never to the high wages government employees get.

So, the question then is; Where do you get the most on the ground work for your OHV funds? It is simple... from the nonprofits.

Yet here we, as a nonprofit, are going through regulations and all questions which are more housekeeping than substance on getting work on the ground done.

Those that really do on ground work, like nonprofits, need to have some way to be able to compete in this grant process. When you see the scoring done as number one in O & M, it is a joke. Those that got number one have only 36 miles of single track trails, the rest are roads, as a level two road, that really do not get OHV funds to maintain. So how is it possible for us who do over 1200 miles of trails, non-maintained by BLM, get scored 15th? Something is terribly wrong with this picture.

It is almost like we need to come up with a true picture of actually who is really working in the field to maintain trails and facilities that benefit the off road community visitors.

Proposal changing the G0 % for Development, Planning and Acquisition: I agree with this, no issue here.

HMP really is the land manager, owner of the lands responsibility so this again really does not affect Non Profit what on ground management responsibilities for the land owner, in our case Federal government be it Forest or BLM. I do not see nonprofits really getting into that as it is not what nonprofits are good with, we are good getting the work done on the ground.

General Criteria.

Right off the bat, questions if yes, answer all except 14

Here again this is for land managers to answer, how do non profit separate what we do vs what BLM maintains. For example we deal with 1200 miles of trails Ridgecrest has 800 left of the 2000 miles in WEMO. How do we get the proper scoring to be able to capture good grant scoring without being relegated down to 15th position? All this information is general in nature and does not clearly distinguish us on our work from others.

The V/O ratios, here again. How does this relate to opportunity on the ground?

How is it possible for those with 40 miles of opportunity can score number one and we with more trails find our selves in 15th position? Poof is that the questions do not have any relationship to opportunity on the ground. It is just visitors.

Take Glamis, it has 65,000 acres of sand, and no trails, yet because of visitors they get a big pot of money and they already have a fee.

There has to be a question that for example states "How many trails are maintained on a regular basis?"

0 to 100 = 2 points

100 to 500 = 3 points

500 to 1000 = 6 points

1000 and up = 10 points

Something like that is needed to put things into perspective.

Item 2. Quality of OHV opportunity:

No issue here. We qualify for all.

3. Variety of OHV opportunity:

Here again, skill level, that is really in the eye of the beholder. For Off-roading, everyone has to be at their own ability, and abilities are totally varied. These questions have nothing to do with opportunity.

Vehicle types, again, this has nothing to do with getting work done on the ground, points for this do not protect our access to public land.

4. Agency contribution:

Here again, what does this have to do with protecting our access? It is nothing but busy work or words to justify asking questions. We, who depend 100% on OHV funds and put everything on the ground get only one point. Those that put in a lot of money get 4 points and can provide little or no opportunity, tell me the logic here.

5. Applicants for prior projects:

No issue here, what we do need is to make sure that the grants administrator know their customers like no one else does.

Martha and Sixto know what we do, they have seen it, have traveled with us and without us to see what we do.

6. No issue. It is the administrator's responsibilities to make sure they visit the grantees, at least once a month, and show up when workers go to the field. It will shock you how little goes out to the field.

7. Prevention of OHV trespass:

- a. Here again they are rewarding 10 points for an enclosed OHV area. 9 times out of 10 those areas charge a fee, yet they can get 10 points for this. What rational would warrant this as an OHV opportunity to get more funding than those of us in Federal lands that provide thousands and thousands of miles of OHV opportunity. This just does not pan out.
- b. Patrol 5 days a week: This is really a law enforcement question. Now, if you ask if we work in the field 5 days a week that is another issue.

Question should be "How many are in the field each day doing trail work?"

1 = 1 point

3 to 5 = 5 points

6 to 10 = 10 points

11 to 15 = 15 points

In other words, the more we have on the ground, the more the mission of staff's actual work on the ground, will be rewarded. As it is now, that question does not even get ranked.

- c. Barriers: We get 3 points, barriers are no opportunity, but yet education maps and telling people where to go only gets 2 points. What is the rational here?

8. Natural and Cultural Resources:

a. Fenced in 5 points, no fence 0. Here those that provide the greatest opportunity get zero, this is totally upside down.

b. Resource management: How does this protect and enhance OHV opportunity? As a nonprofit who does all ground work, we cannot take any points because the land owner in our case the Federal government's staff have to do this. So how can we gain any points here?

9. Soil Management:

c. Monthly monitoring. Here again we are constantly evaluating all trails and making repairs within 24 hours when we see something that needs attention. Yet, we get only 3 points. Those that inspect only when it rains gets 2 points.

10. Sound level testing:

Why is this under O & M.? It is education.

11. OHV education

- a. Materials and kiosk. We get full 5 points for literature and 5 points for Kiosks
- b. Programs, Federal government is not National Parks or State Parks where they have camp fire programs. This is not relevant to ground operation.
- c. Facility open. Here again, there is no distinction on Federal lands open 24 hours a day 365 days a year, yet no extra points for that. This question is for tracks that charge a fee.
- d. ATV safety, what does this have to do with ground operation? That belongs into a safety grant. ATV safety does nothing to have a sustainable OHV trails available for us. It is a personal issue.

12. Web site :

This should be part of the general information as name of applicant, address phone and web site, not a separate number.

13. OHV outreach: Again this is Education. Ground operation should be just that "boots on ground", yet all this additional scoring does absolutely nothing to achieve goal of providing OHV opportunity or preserve OHV opportunity.

14. Sustaining OHV recreation:

There should be only one question. Do you have a management plan to manage OHV and is it being implemented? Yes or no? In our case we have it and have implemented it.

My next question is: What is your priority to managing OHV resources in your office? If once a week, go to zero point. Every day go to 10 points.

Acquisition project Criteria.

3. Providing additional OHV opportunity 2 points.

The purpose of acquisition is to have more OHV opportunity, which should get 50 points. Wow, all those points that have nothing to do with OHV opportunity. Why, this is not a normal park. It is OHV opportunity, which is what OHV funding is for, not for comfort.

Development project Criteria:

There is no question on how will this development enhance OHV opportunity.

5. Management plan should be demanded from land management agencies with all projects for OHV

6. Recycle material: This again has nothing to do with OHV,.

7. Sustainable Technologies: Again nothing to do with OHV opportunity.

8. Sustain OHV: Finally something for OHV, but it is missing how many miles of trails, or how many acres of land will be available for OHV use or additional use.

9. Creates Access: This again is catering to the non-motorized. Why? Every trail that OHV has is open to non-motorized folks. We should not start getting into the business providing access to non-motorized unless it is also open to motorized recreation. Now, if at the end of the road there is barrier for non-motorized opportunity that is fine, but to say will we provide access to non-motorized areas is wrong.

A person on motorcycle, should be able to ride his bike to the staging areas and then go walk to a fishing hole.

11. Partnerships: This one is not workable. Especially for nonprofit. We get dollars to do a job, on the ground, any sub-contractor we work with now is being excluded. So what is the point? We do the work on the ground. No one helps us, or could possibly help us do that. This makes no sense as a question, nor does it add to the OHV opportunity.

12. Primary funding source: If this project will bring more OHV opportunity, and only funds used it is only 2 points. Not many agencies can come up with money, so this is a killer in the first place. It goes back to the question, Will this bring more OHV opportunity, yes or no? ... and give it high points for yes. Rest of questions are just busy work and make life for grants administrators more complicated than need be.

13. Offsite impacts: If you have impacts outside of the area, you get 5 points. If there are no offsite impacts, you get no points. This is totally upside down.

Education and Safety Criteria

1. There is no incentive here for nonprofits who depend on the OHV program to provide programs, one point, so government comes in with their staff, higher cost salaries, etc., and get 10 point max.
2. No issue
4. Eliminating subcontractors who are paid from OHV funds and give us in kind services are not now eligible, again nonprofits are put at total disadvantage.

5. What is purpose of this? The education should not be vehicle specific, but use of OHV on public lands in general. What is needed is education on how to recreate on public lands, that is our down fall. People think they can come to the public lands and do whatever they want. That should be the focus of education
7. This should really be a state wide issue. OHV Division should come up with a program and have it implemented rather everyone try to come up with their own thing. Again, we are failing miserably in educating the public, motorized and non-motorized, on how to use public lands.
8. Here again, this should be a state program, not everyone doing their own thing, and we are wasting OHV funds and have nothing to really show for it after all these years.
9. Again, this is a state wide issue. Come up with a program and see if anyone wants to implement it and have the state do the measurement. This was supposed to be done years ago, there is a Commission committee on this, so why not push them to develop a program, and put money behind it so we have something.
- 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 All are good for Search and Rescue personnel.

Ground Operation Project criteria

1. Again 25 % match, no points. Nonprofits who do work on the ground get nothing. Those that provide questionable work on the ground get 10 points if they provide 76% funding.
2. No issue.
3. Issue with providing levels of riding one point, this is meaningless. It all is in eye of beholder. If public goes off-roading they had better know what they are doing. Putting up difficulty level just invites people to go over their head. Everyone has complete different abilities and it is unrealistic to come up with a difficulty rating.
4. I personally have dedicated all our OHV leadership meetings in Jan., Feb., and March to grants.
5. Again, this is worthless, we get money to do the job. If we have a contractor that gives us a volunteer hours to be used as a match, now it is now allowed. So why even have this? I do not understand exactly why it is even in here. No one is going to help us do trail maintenance, or put up signs for free.
6. No issue.
7. Recycle materials on ground operations, really? Peller posts, wires, reflective signs, dog bones, maps that don't fall apart are somewhat unrealistic to be expected to be made of recycled materials, and shouldn't be denied points for use if recycle component isn't available.
8. This again, we have stated over and over that all OHV trails are open to anyone to access their favorite sport, why is this is even in here?

Sixto, it is just redundant going over these points by points. I feel that the OHV Division, though well intended, has created an application that gives a lot of busy work and drives grants administrators crazy trying to figure out what the applicants are doing to get work done on the ground.

To me is very simple. These questions should be asked:

How many miles of trails do you maintain?

How often do you check all the trails?

How many staff members hit the ground each day?

How often does project coordinator meet with workers in field?

How many vehicles are supported by this staff to do trail work?

How often does the trail maintenance equipment go in the field; i.e. Skip loader, Grader, etc.?

How often are water bars or rolling dips cleaned out to prevent erosion?

How many supplies are being bought, i.e. brown signs, red signs, kiosk, and decals?

Is there a dedicated trail signing crew, if so how many?

How many maps of the area are being distributed?

How often does project coordinator visit and inspect the trails?

How many visitors have visited the areas? (Using a traffic counter.)

How often is trash picked up, camp areas cleaned?

How often are off route violations inspected and corrected to keep public on trails?

How often are all concerned public meeting to discuss issues of the area?

Does the staff have a log of what they have done each day? This is in addition to their time sheet, is there a detail log describing work done on a specific day by trail?

Do they have GPS/Picture data base of all trails and sites worked on?

Do they have picture of these sites that can be located with dots or flags on map?

Is there a GPS, or I-pad, that staff can use to check all sites at any time with a history of each site and trail?

Do they keep the Visitor's center open 365 days a year?

Do they maintain all kiosks in good repair with maps for the local area?

Sixto are just ideas that if I have. Remember you have made it clear you want "Boots on the ground".
The way the grants, OLGA, now is does very little to reward "Boots on the ground".

Thanks. ED